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## House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SCHRADER).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
October 6, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KURT SCHRADER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

### HEALTH CARE PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to correct a misperception held by many in this Chamber and others throughout our great Nation. Members of my party claim that our colleagues across the aisle do not have a health care plan. Well, I'm here to break with my own caucus and say that's just not true. Our Republican friends do in fact have a plan.

Let me offer you some of their highlights. The plan so far offered by our

Republican colleagues would allow health care premiums to double over the next decade; add more than two-thirds to the out-of-pocket expenses for individuals and their families who watched helplessly as premiums and deductibles grew three times faster than their wages over the last decade; and push more families to the brink of financial ruin because they can no longer afford basic health care needs.

In my district alone, more than 1,400 people were forced into bankruptcy last year because of expenses not covered by health insurance.

It doesn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. Their plan would also allow insurance companies to continue racking up profits by denying coverage using capricious standards.

Insurance companies in 45 States would be allowed to continue discriminating based on preexisting conditions for those attempting to purchase insurance on the individual market. It's estimated that more than 12.6 million Americans have been denied coverage because of preexisting conditions already.

Insurance companies in eight States and the District of Columbia would be allowed to continue denying coverage to survivors of domestic violence because they classify history of such violence as a preexisting condition, which is a particularly egregious example of cherry-picking by insurance companies, considering October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Even those lucky enough to have health insurance will continue to find their coverage or their costs altered due to preexisting conditions, which affect up to 45 percent of us who already have health care insurance.

The Republican plan, or lack thereof, also will make it harder in the business community to continue meeting the needs of its workers and customers. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study showed that 42 percent of em-

ployers are preparing to increase premiums next year; 39 percent of employers are preparing to increase out-of-pocket expenses for doctor visits next year; 37 percent of employers are preparing to increase out-of-pocket prescription drug costs next year; and 8 percent said they already have reached the tipping point and have decided to drop health care coverage altogether next year.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses in the Commonwealth of Virginia alone spent more than \$3 billion on health care premiums last year. That figure is expected to more than double to \$7.4 billion during the next decade if we do nothing.

Today, less than half of Virginia's small businesses offer health insurance to their employees, with three-fourths saying they're struggling to do so. The plan offered by our Republican colleagues would only exacerbate that situation and likely push more businesses into withdrawing health care coverage altogether.

But that's not what our businesses want. Not only do two-thirds of Virginia's small businesses say health care reform will play an important part in getting the economy back on track, but more than half of them also say they, themselves, have a responsibility to help provide coverage for their employees.

A majority of Americans—57 percent—say it's now more important than ever to reform our broken health care system. Unfortunately, the plan from our Republican colleagues amounts to “do nothing and hope for the best.” Well, we can't afford that plan. And, thankfully, Americans are starting to come to the same realization.

That same poll found that 57 percent of the public faults our Republican colleagues for opposing health care reform more for political reasons than substantive argument.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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